

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2925

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: TUCSA NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO
ORGANIZE PARALLEL BLACK UNIONS & TO BACK TEXTILE WORKERS IN
THEIR CONTINUING STRUGGLE WITH EMPLOYERS: QUESTION IS -
DOES TUCSA HAVE WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO IMPLEMENT DECISIONS?

1. 200,000 MEMBER MULTI-RACIAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA
(TUCSA) HELD ITS NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN DURBAN FROM AUGUST
13-17. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

A. RESOLUTION CALLING UPON TUCSA AND AFFILIATES "TO EXAMINE PRACTICAL
WAYS TO ESTABLISH PARALLEL UNION ORGANIZATIONS AND AFRICAN
WORKERS."

B. RESOLUTION PLEDGING "THE FULL SUPPORT OF TUCSA TO THE TEXTILE
WORKERS IN THEIR JUST STRUGGLE FOR A DECENT & HUMANE STANDARD OF
LIVING" AGAINST FRAME GROUP IN PARTICULAR BUT ALSO MOST OTHER
EMPLOYERS.

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C. PRO-MULTI-RACIAL ADDRESSES BY HOMELANDS LEADERS BUTHELEZI & MANGOPE IN WHICH FORMER ONCE AGAIN ENDORSED WORKS COMMITTEES AS "NUCLEUS OF FUTURE TRADE UNIONS" & LATTER, WHILE EXPRESSING VIEW THAT TUCSA HAD "GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY" TO HELP BUILD "HONEST ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP", NEVERTHELESS EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT TRADE UNION OR ANY OTHER "SIMPLE SOLUTION" TO PROBLEMS OF SOUTH AFRICA, SAYING ONLY "CHANGE OF HEART" COULD LEAD TO NECESSARY "EXISTENTIAL SECURITY" FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS.

D. TOTAL OF TWENTY-EIGHT RESOLUTIONS MOST OF WHICH EXPRESSED LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR THOSE HAVING TO DO WITH LABOR, TAXES, WAGES, AND SOCIAL BENEFITS. (DELEGATES SUPPORTED RESOLUTIONS WITH SPEECHES & STATEMENTS MANY OF WHICH WERE OUTSPOKEN & EVEN SAVAGE INDICTMENTS OF PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN SOUTH AFRICA.)

2. COMMENT: TUCSA LEADERS KNOW THEY HAVE CROSSED RUBICON & MUST NOW MOVE WITHOUT DELAY FROM RESOLUTIONS & SPEECHES TO EFFECTIVE ACTION. IN THIS CONNECTION, HOWEVER, THEY GIVE IMPRESSION THEY ARE SUBSTANTIALLY LESS CONCERNED ABOUT PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING AFRICANS (INCLUDING PROBLEMS WITH GOVERNMENT) THAN ABOUT UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED IN TAKING ON FRAME & OTHER TEXTILE MAGNATES. DURING MID-CONFERENCE MEETING OF TUCSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ATTENDED BY REGIONAL LABOR OFFICER & AALC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR O'FARRELL) CALLED TO DISCUSS TRADE UNION EDUCATION & RELATED SUBJECT, ONE TOP WHITE LEADER EXPRESSED VIEW THAT ORGANIZING AFRICANS WOULD BE "PIECE OF CAKE" AND NOBODY DISAGREED WITH HIM. (ON OTHER HAND WHEN RLO AND O'FARRELL TALKED WITH BANNED LEADER OF BLACK ALLIED WORKERS UNION, DRAKE KOKA, IN JOHANNESBURG AUGUST 17, LATTER TOOK POSITION THAT TUCSA WOULD ENCOUNTER SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN ITS EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE AFRICANS FOR SIMPLE REASON THAT, IN MAKING ITS PLANS & REACHING ITS DECISIONS, IT HAD NEGLECTED TO REQUEST OR HEED ADVICE OF AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISTS. IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS HAVE HEADLINED AS VIRTUAL TUCSA DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST FRAME GROUP, CONFERENCE PASSED HAT FOR R250 AUGUST 14 & SEVERAL UNIONS PLEDGED TOTAL OF ABOUT R3000 FOLLOWING DAY BUT LEADERS UNCERTAIN WHETHER FRAME REPRESENTS HEAVEN-SENT OPPORTUNITY TO DRAMATIZE TUCSA'S INTEREST IN HELPING AFRICANS OR POTENTIAL CLASH WITH ENTIRE ESTABLISHMENT WHICH TUCSA COULD EASILY LOSE. TO CONCLUDE, WHAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS IN DOUBT FOLLOWING TUCSA CONVERENCE IS NOT ORGANIZATION'S SINCERITY BUT ITS ABILITY TO DO JUSTICE TO TASK IT HAS LAID OUT FOR ITSELF.
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